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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/874,296	06/06/2001	Hiroyuki Uchida	NE-1044-US/kmt	7573
21254	7590	03/30/2004	EXAMINER	
MCGINN & GIBB, PLLC 8321 OLD COURTHOUSE ROAD SUITE 200 VIENNA, VA 22182-3817				CRANE, SARA W
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
				2811

DATE MAILED: 03/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/874,296	UCHIDA, HIROYUKI	
	Examiner	Art Unit	An
	Sara W. Crane	2811	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 10 and 12-16 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 11, 17 and 18 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/6/01</u> .	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____.
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DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-9 are allowed.

Claims 11 and 17-18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The antecedents for "said first and second capacitances" are in claim 11, and not claim 10.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 10 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yen.

With respect to claim 10, Yen teaches in figure 3, for example, a surge protection circuit comprising floating gate transistors, protecting a pad electrode 13. A plurality of vertical and horizontal signal lines, each attached to input or output pads at the edge of the chip, would have been obvious, because integrated circuits are usually laid out in such a manner. The circuit of lines 10-18 appears to read on the circuit of Yen figure 3, with sources and drains of adjacent transistors connected as shown, and with a surge potential inherent in the teaching, because the purpose of the circuit is to protect from ESD stress (column 4, line 13). With respect to claims 13-15, multiple protection circuits would have been obvious to increase the level of protection. Claim 16 parallels claim 10, where the low-impedance path to ground is inherent in the functioning of a surge protection circuit (which shunts the surge to ground).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to S. Crane, whose telephone number is (517) 272-1652.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist, whose telephone number is (517) 272-1562.


Sara W. Crane
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2811